

DOCTORAL SCHOOL

Quality Assurance System Manual

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1. Introduction

Article 31 of the Organic Law 6/2001 of Universities (LOU), which deals with Quality Assurance, expresses the need to establish quality assurance criteria to facilitate assessment, certification and accreditation and regards quality assurance as an essential goal of university policy. Similarly, Royal Decree 1393/2007, which provides for the organisation of official university studies (and was partly modified by Royal Decree 861/2010), acknowledges quality assurance to be one of the basic elements that all study plans should take account of. For its part, article 13.2 of Royal Decree 99/2011, regulating official doctoral studies, spells out the fact that universities should, by means of Doctoral Schools, “establish control procedures with a view to guaranteeing the quality of doctoral theses, with particular attention to the quality of the candidate’s training and of the supervision”.

In fulfilment of its obligations, the University of Alcalá’s Doctoral School (UAHDS) abides by the procedures established by the University in respect of quality assurance, among which are the agreement of Governing Body of 29 January 2009 to establish the University of Alcalá’s model of Quality Assurance System (QAS) and the *Processes Manual*, approved by the UAH’s Quality Committee on 26 September 2011, which acts as a general framework for the QAS of all this University’s centres.

That said, due to the special challenges they pose for management and to their length, a specific QAS needs to be defined for doctoral studies which is distinct from the system devised for other degrees. Doctoral studies require a more flexible but also simpler system which enables more effective monitoring, assessment and improvement of them. This framework document is meant to bring together the elements common to all the UAH’s doctoral programmes.

A QAS should set out the bodies responsible for taking decisions about assessing and enhancing quality, the procedures for fixing goals (quality criteria and guidelines), the means of measuring quality (indicators) and the programmes of work which sustain it. At the same time, in order for the verification and subsequent accreditation of degrees, those in charge of doctoral programmes need to demonstrate that the following are in place:

- A system for gathering information about, for reviewing and for improving
 - The competences and goals of the doctoral programmes,
 - Admission policies and procedures,
 - The planning of training complements, where appropriate,
 - The development of training activities,
 - The assessment of students,
 - Student orientation,
 - Endowment of academic staff,
 - Teaching resources and services, and
 - The results of learning.

- Procedures for gathering information from degree holders, employers and other relevant social groups about the employment found by degree holders, the training acquired and professional profiles.

2. The UAHDS Quality Assurance System

Designing the QAS is a key element in the policy and training activities run from the UAHDS. Accordingly, it establishes beforehand the goals sought as a consequence of its implementation. Thus, the basic goals of the Doctoral School's QAS are:

- To guarantee the quality of all its doctoral programmes by reviewing and, whenever necessary, improving their training processes.
- To ensure that said process of designing and improving all training processes is based on full knowledge of the needs and expectations of stakeholders, who will be informed as and when necessary.
- To ensure that the analysis and improvement of all training processes are constant and updated, to which end the QAS itself needs to be a constantly evolving tool.

The expected outcomes are:

- To fulfil the commitment to satisfy the needs and expectations of society.
- To provide the transparency required in the framework of the EHEA.
- To incorporate strategies of ongoing improvement.
- To organise teaching initiatives systematically so that they contribute efficiently to quality assurance.
- To facilitate the accreditation of degrees.

When devising its QAS, the UAHDS has taken account of, among others, these principles of action:

- Legality and legal security: the UAHDS has designed its QAS in line with current university legislation and the quality assurance criteria and guidelines in place within the European Higher Education Area.
- Publicity, transparency and participation: the UAHDS will publicise its QAS design process, will introduce procedures for gaining access to the proposals and reports that may be generated in the course of that process, and will enable all potential stakeholders to take part.

There follows a list of the regulations and benchmark documents to be born in mind in the QAS process:

Regarding University governance:

- Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December, of Universities, modified by Organic Law 4/2007, of 12 April.

- Decree 221/2003, of 23 October, whereby Governing Body approved the Statutes of the UAH, subsequently modified by the same at its session of 26 January 2012, said modification being published in the BOCM of 10 February 2012 (Decree 18/2012, of 26 January)
- Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, establishing the organization of official university studies, modified by Royal Decree 861/2010, of 2 July.
- Current UAH regulations.

Regarding the UAHDS

- Royal Decree 778/1998, of 30 April, in regulation of the third cycle of university studies, and of obtaining and issuing the degree title of doctor and other postgraduate studies.
- Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, establishing the organization of official university studies (PDF), modified by Royal Decree 861/2010 (PDF), of 2 July.
- Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, in regulation of official doctoral studies, modified by Royal Decree 534/2013, of 12 July.
- UAHDS Internal Regulations, approved by the Governing Body of the University of Alcalá at its session of 2 October 2012.
- Regulations concerning the Writing, Authorisation and Examination of Doctoral Theses, approved by the Governing Body of the UAH at its session of 23 February 2012, modified by the same at its session of 12 December 2013.
- Rules of Residence for Doctoral Programmes, regulated by RD 99/2011.
- Rules about the concession of extraordinary doctorate awards for doctoral theses, approved by the Governing Body of the UAH at its session of 12 December 2013.
- Procedure for Joint Tuition of Doctoral Theses, approved by the Governing Body of the UAH at its session of 26 May 2011.
- Regulations concerning External Practical Placements for UAH Postgraduate Programmes, approved by the Governing Body of the UAH at its session of 24 March 2011.
- Order of Madrid Regional Government 11375/2012, of 29 October, authorising the creation of the Doctoral School of the UAH.

Proper to the QAS:

- Manual for QAS.
- UAHDS *Code of Good Practice*, passed by the Executive Board of the UAHDS at its meeting of 21 January 2014.

3. The UAHDS quality policy

The University of Alcalá's Doctoral School (UAHDS) was created on 29 October 2012 with a view to organizing the teaching and other activities proper to a doctoral degree in the five branches of knowledge: Arts and Humanities, Sciences, Legal and Social Sciences, Health Sciences, and Engineering and Architecture. Doctoral programmes

cater for the advanced training of students in research techniques and culminate in the preparation and examination of an original piece of research work known as the doctoral thesis. If completed successfully, the degree of Doctor is awarded, which is the highest academic university degree.

The UAH's firm commitment to achieving high quality doctoral studies which enable students to become academic, professional or research specialists means that those studies occupy a key position in our University's offer of academic programmes. For this reason, the UAHDS has established the following general quality goals:

- To ensure that the UAHDS QAS is understood by and receives the consent of all staff, and is available for public consultation.
- To implant a culture of quality and ongoing and systematic improvement in all administrative and academic activities related to the doctoral programmes.
- To enhance satisfaction among students matriculated in doctoral programmes by means of direct, personalised attention which will facilitate their progress, reduce abandonment rates, and enhance their academic results, thereby setting them at a comparative advantage when it comes to finding employment or securing a research post.
- To make the permanent commitment to ongoing improvement a rule of conduct, and to propose and administer whatever corrective or preventive actions may be necessary.
- To ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the QAS, as well as its periodical control and review.

4. Bodies responsible for the QAS

UAHDS Quality Committee

At its meeting of 3 June 2013, the UAHDS Managing Committee approved the creation of the School's Quality Committee as the body responsible for monitoring and guaranteeing the quality of the UAH's doctoral programmes. Its members are:

- Vice-rector for Postgraduate and Ongoing Education (Chair)
- Vice-rector for Teaching and Students
- Director of the UAHDS (Secretary)
- Director of the Educational Science Institute
- Head of the Official Postgraduate Studies Service
- Two representatives of doctoral programme coordinators
- Two representatives of doctoral students

As set out in its regulations, approved at its meeting of 10 July 2013, the Quality Committee has the following functions:

- To foment and supervise the quality assurance system for doctoral programmes.

- To coordinate the gathering of data, reports and any other information about the progress of doctoral programmes and training activities run by the UAHDS.
- To supervise and coordinate the process of keeping track of ex alumni.
- To coordinate the monitoring of result and the actions taken to introduce improvements.
- To draft and approve the annual report monitoring the studies run by the Doctoral School and verifying the compliance of the different programmes with the UAH's quality policy and goals.
- In order to perform its functions, to be empowered collectively or by delegation of one of its members to request hearings or interviews with teaching staff and students and to propose measures to programme leaders and those responsible for the activities that take place in the departments and institutes where research is conducted
- To bring before the UAH Quality Committee the annual monitoring report and as many recommendations for improvement it deems necessary in order to enhance the quality of doctoral programmes.
- To draft and, where necessary, modify its own internal regulations.

Doctoral Programme Quality Commission

Each doctoral programme will have a Quality Commission which may be the same as the programme's academic committee or may be a subcommittee of it. Its members will be:

- The programme's coordinator.
- One of two representatives of the programme's research lines/research group.
- A student, who does not sit on the academic committee.

Its functions will be as follows:

- To define the programme's quality policy and objectives.
- To gather data, reports and any other information regarding the progress of the study plan.
- To monitor the established quality assurance system.
- To analyse and assess the results obtained.
- To revise and approve the annual *Quality Memorandum*.
- To propose plans and actions for improvement.
- To monitor the results of the improvement actions taken.

Interuniversity doctoral programmes will have an Interuniversity Coordination Academic Committee, whose members and functions will be as stipulated in the agreement signed by the universities participating in the joint programme. This composite committee will be informed by the Quality Commission of the UAH programme of any actions it takes and will be the body responsible for monitoring and assessing the degree, as well as for proposing any modifications to the studies it deems

appropriate, in line with the procedure each participating university established to that effect.

Quality Technical Unit

The Quality Technical Unit has the following functions:

- To offer technical support in the design, development and implementation of the QAS.
- To liaise between the UAHDS and the Madridmasd Knowledge Trust, which is the body responsible for accrediting and certifying university quality in the Madrid Region.
- To develop the accreditation programme designed by the Madridmasd Knowledge Trust.
- To write and annual general report about the results of the doctoral programmes' quality memoranda.

5. Description of the QAS strategy process

The aim of this process is to determine how UAH doctoral programmes may act in order to guarantee the definition, review and implementation of its quality policy and goals, that quality necessarily being in consonance with the quality as generally defined for the whole University. This process will be applied both when defining at the outset the quality policy and goals of each of the doctoral programmes and when submitting them to periodical review.

Each programme's Quality Commission will write an annual *Quality Memorandum* and submit a plan of improvements to the UAHDS Quality Committee. The memorandum will analyse the data regarding the following sections of this *Quality Assurance System Manual*:

- Communication and information regarding the doctoral programme.
- Promotion of doctoral programmes.
- Teaching and research staff policy.
- Selection, admission and matriculation.
- Training complements.
- Training activities.
- Mobility schemes.
- Keeping track of ex alumni.
- Handling of incidents, complaints and suggestions.
- Stakeholder satisfaction.
- Training of teaching and research staff.
- Material resources.
- Managing QAS documents evidence.
- Analysis, improvement and accountability.

The UAHDS will then send an overall report to the UAH Quality Committee, which will take charge of proposing improvement actions, where necessary, and of approving the Annual Quality Memorandum before its ratification by Governing body, publication in accordance with specified procedure, and review, analysis and improvement according to the corresponding procedure.

6. Design and approval of doctoral programmes

Programmes leading to the award of degrees of doctor must comply with the following process:

1) Proposal for new programme. The department or research centre involved formulates its proposal and sends it to the UAHDS, where the design process will be managed and controlled up to its approval. The following bodies will have a say in approval:

- The UAHDS Managing Committee.
- The Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee, which will study the proposals as submitted and accept those whose subjects or academic or strategic interest to the University, recommend their implementation. Accepted proposals are remitted to the University's Governing Body and Social Council.
- In its capacity of collegiate body for the general governance of the University, Governing Body must approve the implementation of the programme.
- In its capacity of the body where society at large participates in the UAH, the Social Council must give its approval, bearing in mind the impact the proposed studies will have on society.

Proposals to modify pre-existing doctoral programmes will be made by the corresponding academic committee before being approved by the Managing Committee of the UAHDS and notified to the rest of the University's organs of government.

2) Referral of proposals. The UAHDS refers proposed doctoral programmes to the Universities' Council in order for them to be subjected to the verification process.

3) Verification. Doctoral programmes are verified by the Universities' Council, it falling to the National Quality Assessment and Accreditation Agency (NQAAA) or the evaluating bodies specified by regional legislation to define the verification protocols.

4) Implementation. Once verified, the implementation of doctoral programmes must be authorised by the corresponding regional government.

5) Registration. The Ministry of Education and Science will raise before the national government the proposal to officially institute the degree and register it in the Registry of Universities, Centres and Degrees (RUCD).

6) Publication. The degrees listed in the RUCD are published in the Official State Bulletin. In accordance with the provisions of Organic Law 4/2007, of 12 April, also known as LOMLOU, the UAH proceeds to publish each of the study plans.

7. Temporary or definitive suspension of a doctoral programme

There is provision for the suspension of a doctoral programme in the event of failing to pass the evaluating agency's assessment process, as set out in article 10 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, regulating the verification, monitoring and renewal of doctoral programme accreditation.

The UAHDS may also propose the extinction of a doctoral programme in any of the following cases:

- The programme ceases to cater to the training needs it was intended to address when initially instituted.
- The UAHDS Quality Committee detects serious shortcomings or failure to comply with the programme's goals.
- At the request of the programme's academic committee.
- The Regional Government of Madrid withdraws its authorization for teaching the degree.

In all cases, the final decision lies with the Official Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Committee and Governing Body. In all cases too, it would constitute an exceptional situation since the continuous assessment of doctoral studies by the Quality Committee enables the improvements and updates to be made that may be necessary at any moment.

Should it be necessary to proceed to the extinction of the degree in spite of the corrective measures provided for, the UAHDS will take the action required to ensure that students who have embarked on the corresponding studies have the opportunity to complete them satisfactorily.

Should a doctoral programme become extinct while students remain matriculated in it, the doctoral programme's quality committee will establish appropriate mechanisms permitting the implementation and performance of tutorial and orientation activities to be monitored, while at the same time carrying on with the habitual analyses of the conduct of teaching, research and assessment.

8. Communication and information regarding the doctoral programme

The UAH implements a Communications Plan, the keystone of which is the necessary differentiation between information of internal interest and information of external interest. This entails the identification and specific use of suitable channels of communication and the identification of distinct groups of recipients on a case by case

basis. Accordingly, a distinction should be made between channels of internal dissemination (Mi Portal, electronic screens, email and internal mail) and of external dissemination (webpage, email and conventional mail, digital newspaper, and so on).

It is also vital to understand that although any member of the University is a potential source of information, not all members may make indiscriminate use of the available channels. All have the right to communicate, and a tool has been designed to maximise that right. However, the implantation of an effective communications policy requires the orderly management of communication flows, which in turn means the implementation of relevant measures.

In order to meet the goals established, an *ad hoc* IT application, COMUNICA, has been created. This is the backbone of the internal and external dissemination and serves three main functions:

- Dissemination of information as and when it arises.
- Updating of web-page contents.
- Updating of web-page news.

As far as doctoral studies are concerned, communication is also possible by means of the University's intranet (Mi Portal) and the Virtual Classroom fora.

Questionnaires and statistics will be the main tools for assessing the model as implemented. The former will permit users' perceptions and satisfaction levels to be evaluated; the latter will permit the efficacy of the different measures adopted to be gauged.

Each programme's Quality Committee will have a copy of the Communications Plan for the purposes of evidence.

9. Promotion of doctoral programmes

The UAHDS organizes, reviews, manages and improves activities aimed at promoting and disseminating the UAH's doctoral programmes with a view to informing future students about the University's academic offer.

The UAHDS carries out those activities for attracting students in collaboration with the Communication, Information and Promotion Service, on the one hand, and the Department of Institutional Communication on the other. On the former depend the Information Centre and the Promotion Section, while the Press Office and image and social and audiovisual networks depend on the latter. All have specific tasks to perform in five different areas:

- Attendance at fairs and salons.
- Information campaigns in the media.
- Preparation of informative material.

- The UAHDS web-page and the pages of each doctoral programme.
- Social networks.

The Communication, Information and Promotion Service is in charge of coordinating the activities and programmes approved by the relevant Vice-rectorate and the UAHDS. It also prepares annual reports following up the activities carried out in its remit, thereby accounting for its activities.

The preparation of informative material relating to the different doctoral programmes is the task of the Official Postgraduate Studies Service and/or the leaders of each programme.

When assessing promotion of doctoral programmes, the following indicators will be taken into account:

- Attendance at fairs or salons: number of fairs attended by the UAH and the number of visitors and/or resources employed.
- Information campaigns in the media and information dossiers (relating to pre-registration and entry for new students and prepared by the Communication, Information and Promotion Service).
- Participation in radio networks.
- Participation in social networks.

Each programme's quality commission will have at its disposal the following sources of evidence:

- A document defining the actions to take for the purposes of promotion and capturing students.
- A document approving the Promotion Plan.
- Informative material about the doctoral programmes.

10. Teaching and research staff policy

The relevant Vice-rectorate assumes responsibility for designing and drafting the teaching and research staff (TRS) policy of the UAH, as well as for its application, review and improvement. To this end, the UAH has established a series of action programmes:

- Teaching staff training programme.
- Rules regarding teaching obligations of teaching staff
- TRS promotion and improvement programme
- Concerted incentives scheme
- Teaching and research staff mobility scheme

Governing Body is responsible for approving the UAH's staff policy. This should at least give details of the method of teaching staff recruitment and occupation of posts and of the processes and guarantees regarding teacher assessment. This staff policy should also include information for the purposes of TRS accreditation, promotion and incentive recognition, as well as offering training focused on professional development by means of the incorporation of new technologies, innovation and the improvement of teaching praxis, all with a view to increasing professional qualification.

Each doctoral programme's quality commission gathers information about the teaching staff participating in its programme with the aim of recommending relevant improvements wherever necessary. This information and these recommendations are set out in the quality commission's annual memorandum, which must take account of the following indicators:

- Number of teaching staff in each research group associated with the doctoral programme.
- Number of teaching staff in possession of latest research assessment or who have produced quality publications.
- Number of teaching staff who have supervised at least one doctoral thesis in the last 5 years.
- Research projects in progress (secured in public competition) in each research team.
- Participation of foreign teaching staff in the programme.

When analysing these indicators, the preliminary guidelines devised by the NQAAA for the doctoral programme verification process will be taken into consideration. These aspects will be analysed:

- Whether at least 60% of the participating researchers are doctors with accredited research experience, not including short-term guest or visiting researchers.
- Whether three members of each research team have a research assessment in progress or have produced quality publications, and have supervised at least one doctoral thesis in the last five years.
- Each doctoral programme research team is currently embarked on a research project secured in public competition and related to subjects associated with the research lines considered in the programme.
- The quality of the 25 scientific contributions published in the last five years and submitted by the research doctors participating in the programme is deemed adequate and said publications are distributed evenly across the different research teams.
- The quality of the 10 scientific contributions deriving from the 10 doctoral theses submitted is deemed adequate.
- There are plans for foreign teaching staff to take part in the programme.

Each programme's quality commission will have copies of the following sources of evidence, provided by the competent administrative services:

- Documents from the responsible units relating to the award of six-year research assessments.
- Documents relating to the award of research projects.

11. Selection, admission and matriculation

The process of entry and admission onto a doctoral programme involves the applicant and the responsible academic committee directly. When applying for admission onto a doctoral programme, it is recommended that candidates follow these steps:

- Check they meet the general access and specific admission requirements.
- Find out all the details about the doctoral programme they wish to pursue.
- Contact the doctoral programme's coordinator and their potential thesis supervisor.
- Apply to the Doctoral School for access by completing the admission application form, attaching all the required documentation.

After checking that the student meets the access requirements, the Doctoral School will remit the documentation to the doctoral programme's academic committee in order for it to decide whether or not to admit the student.

Once admitted, the academic committee will assign the student a tutor. The student will have to sign the *Learning and Good Practice Agreement*, together with tutor and thesis supervisor. This *Learning and Good Practice Agreement* and the other admission documents must then be returned to the Doctoral School.

The UAHDS will notify students of their admission once all due documentation has been received in the prescribed period and on paper. Should the academic committee refuse admission, students may make the relevant appeal in the space of three days after receiving notification of the decision. Should the decision still be negative, students may appeal to the Rector.

Students will then matriculate in the corresponding doctoral programme by means of the automatriculation system. They will also make their payment in the mode selected.

In its annual memorandum each programme's Quality Commission will analyse matriculation data and study the complaints and suggestions of stakeholders in order to identify the existence of any problems, difficulties or anomalies in the entry and admission procedure. The following indicators will be taken into account:

- Percentage take-up of places
- Evolution of matriculation data

Each programme's quality commission will be in possession of the following sources of evidence:

- Pre-registration forms or admission applications.
- Matriculations.

12. Training complements

Depending on the prior training of new students, some doctoral programmes, as indicated in their verification memoranda as submitted to the NQAAA, make provision for students to take credits in training complements. There is no specific academic curriculum pertaining to these doctoral studies; rather, each programme's academic committee will tell students which courses they need to take in order to complete their training.

For the purposes of providing said complements, the UAHDS will coordinate the prospectus of courses at master's level and/or of self-regulated courses which will cover those areas of research which are necessary if doctoral students are to pursue their doctoral studies adequately.

In order to assess the quality of these complements, each doctoral programme will follow the procedure designed for the purpose in the Postgraduate School's QAS, it being the Postgraduate School which oversees the teaching of such complements.

13. Training activities

Transversal training activities

The UAHDS runs three types of optional transversal activities, the aim of which is to develop the competences and personal capacities common to all our doctoral programmes:

- **Seminars.** The UAHDS offers annually a series of seminars for students of all doctoral programmes on matters related to the search and management of information, the oral and written presentation of research, project preparation, ethical aspects of research, and so on. It is advisable to attend these seminars during the first or second year of the doctorate.
- **Young researchers' seminars.** For several years, the University of Alcalá has been running these seminars, which provide students with the opportunity to present their research and preview some of its findings before their fellow-students and lecturers. It is advisable to carry out this activity in the second or third year of the doctorate.
- **Placements in companies.** To help students understand better how the world of work operates and to apply research methods from industry, business or the

institutions to their own work, our doctoral programmes may offer placements in companies with research departments.

Taking part in an external placement requires that an educational cooperation agreement between the UAH and the company or institution involved for the practical training of students be signed beforehand. This agreement will be formalized at the proposal of the body responsible for running the doctoral programme and will be signed in the name of the UAH by the Rector or competent Vice-rector, and by the legal representative of the company or institution, of the person delegated by the same.

Should it not be possible to formalise an educational cooperation agreement for reasons beyond the UAH's control, the placement can proceed provided that a document is furnished in which the company or entity accedes to participate in the placement and which has been approved by the competent Vice-rector and the supervisor or tutor of the doctoral thesis.

The UAHDS Quality Committee will conduct satisfaction questionnaires relating to the transversal training activities in order to assess thereby how they were carried out and, when necessary, to make pertinent proposals for improvement in its annual monitoring report.

To this end, the following indicators will be taken into account:

- Number of transversal training activities offered.
- Number of places offered in each activity.
- Number of students participating in each one.
- Report assessing student surveys.
- Number of students participating in work placements.
- Number of signed cooperation agreements.

The UAHDS Quality Committee will be in possession of the following sources of evidence:

- Training activity assessment questionnaires.
- Reports.
- Cooperation agreements.

Specific training activities

Each doctoral programme will have a range of specific training activities catering to the interests of its students. The programme's academic committee will be in charge of planning them, establishing their criteria, defining their goals and contents, and formulating control procedures, bearing in mind what the programme's verification memorandum has to say on the matter.

Each doctoral programme's quality commission will be in possession of training activity satisfaction surveys in order to assess thereby how they were carried out and, when necessary, to make pertinent proposals for improvement in its annual *Quality memorandum*, which will be written as part of the process of monitoring the programme.

Each programme's quality commission will be in possession of the following sources of evidence:

- Training activity assessment questionnaires.
- Reports.

14. Mobility schemes

Through the participation of university teaching staff and, where appropriate, researchers and experts of repute in this scheme, it is hoped to enhance university doctoral studies and increase cooperation with other Spanish and foreign institutions. With regard to student mobility, the aim is to facilitate activities related to research in doctoral programmes run in other centres of universities. What is more, mobility is part and parcel of studies pursued under the terms of joint degree agreements with other Spanish or foreign universities.

Mobility can be instrumentalised in the following ways:

- Joint doctoral programmes between different universities.
 - The study plan is devised and approved jointly by two or more universities.
 - An agreement specifies the academic and administrative conditions in which the studies are to be conducted.
 - The agreement provides for, as appropriate, the mobility scheme which affects both teaching staff and students.
- The formalization of cotutelage agreements for doctoral theses.
- Mobility grants and subventions offered by the Ministry of Education in different ambits.
- The UAHDS travel pool.
- Mobility grants tied to doctoral programmes awarded the Towards Excellence Mention.
- Doctoral theses with International Mention.
- Grants aimed at teaching staff and students.
 - Short stays tied to Research Staff and University Teaching Staff Scholarships.
 - Mobility grants and subventions offered by the Regional Government of Castile-La Mancha and tied to Research Staff Training Grants (RST).
 - Mobility grants and subventions offered by the UAH and tied to the RST scheme.

Each programme's quality commission will analyse annually the number of teachers and students who have travelled to another university, whether at home or abroad, and those who have arrived as visiting lecturers. Similarly, account will be had of the number of students proceeding from other universities and of those who, while matriculated in the UAH, decide to pursue their studies in another university.

Each programme's quality commission will be in possession of the following sources of evidence:

- Where appropriate, the number of universities participating in joint doctoral programmes and the number of students matriculated in those programmes.
- The number of signed cotutelage agreements.
- The number of students writing their thesis under cotutelage.
- The number of theses examined with the international mention, which entails a stay in another research institution.
- The number of students carrying out placements in institutions requiring mobility.
- Grants and subventions applied for and awarded.
- Degree of student's satisfaction with the mobility scheme.

15. Keeping track of ex alumni

The Placements and Orientation service performs periodical studies of UAH graduates' record of securing employment. In order to keep track of departing doctors, the service maintains a record containing data from a questionnaire to be carried out using the computer application as set out in the doctoral programmes' verification memoranda.

Each year, the UAHDS will inform all its ex alumni of the benefits of completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire will contain three types of data:

- Academic data:
 - Undergraduate and master's degrees completed
 - Doctoral studies: programme, dates, duration, grade, mobility, prizes, etc.
- Professional data:
 - Corporate or professional sector
 - Periods and length of occupation
 - Company or institution: name, number of employees, location, etc, etc.
 - Professional category and position
- Other data.
 - Does your company carry out I+D projects?
 - Is a PhD required for your position?
 - Did your PhD help you secure your job?
 - Do you continue to do research or do you expect to do so in the near future?
 - Is your work related to your doctoral thesis?
 - Are you in touch with your thesis supervisor/s?

- Are you in touch with the department or institute which ran your doctoral programme?
- How would you rate your doctoral programme?

When an ex alumnus opens the application, the questionnaire will appear on screen with the latest data already filled in so that he or she will only have to enter the data which have changed with respect to the last questionnaire.

Once the data have been collected from the questionnaires, the results are assessed. To this end the computer application generates an assessment report of all questionnaire results. This report will be available to the doctoral programme's quality commission in order for it to analyse the results and, as appropriate, determine improvements. Each programme's quality commission will include the results in its annual memorandum, taking into account data from one or various years.

The quality commission's annual memorandum will also take into account the following data related to the results of the last 5 years:

- Grades achieved by doctoral theses (giving the percentage of theses awarded the distinction *Cum Laude*).
- European doctorates of doctorates with international mentions.
- Prizes (extraordinary doctorate prizes, or others).
- Success rate of full-time students: percentage of total full-time candidates who submit and defend their theses in 3, 4 or 5 years.
- Success rate of part-time students: percentage of total part-time candidates who submit and defend their theses in 5, 6, 7 or 8 years.

Each programme's quality commission will be in possession of the following sources of evidence:

- Questionnaires.
- Reports.
- Data about matriculation and examination of doctoral theses.

16. Handling incidents, complaints and suggestions

The University's General Secretariat makes available various channels to attend to any member of the university community or external user of its services who may wish to register an incident, complaint or suggestion about the activities of the various centres or administrative services. By means of its Virtual Campus and web-page, the UAH informs stakeholders of their right to register incidents, complaints or suggestions and how to do so.

There is a Complaints and Suggestions Box, the aim of which is to keep a record of complaints, ideas or suggestions about the working of the UAHDS. Interested parties may make a complaint or suggestion in two ways:

- In person: by filling out, printing and handing in at any of the University of Alcalá's registries the form available from the UAH website.
- Electronically: by sending the completed form to quejas.sugerencias@uah.es. An email address must be given.

When the UAHDS receives a complaint, the grounds of the grievance or incident are examined and appropriate measures are proposed with a view to solving the anomaly. At the same time, the feasibility of suggestions made is studied and their possible contribution to improving the operation or quality of the service.

Moreover, the doctoral programme coordinator or its teaching staff may receive complaints directly from the students. If so, they must inform the programme's quality commission and, where necessary, the services or personnel affected by the complaint or suggestion.

Interested parties will be notified of all action taken in the space of 20 days and advised that, should they remain dissatisfied with the measures adopted, they should appeal to superior university authorities, such as the University Ombudsman.

Each complaint or suggestion will be kept on file. If the complaint implies any abnormal functioning of the services, relevant action may be taken on a case by case basis. Under no circumstances will the complaints made be treated as administrative appeals.

On the basis of the complaints received, the University's General Secretariat produces a report about the study of the grounds and the actions taken.

Once a year the programme's quality commission will examine the complaints and suggestions received in the course of the academic year; will analyse the most recurrent grounds for complaint, the solution rate for complaints and the suitability or viability of suggestions. The following indicators will be taken into account:

- Number of incidents per academic year.
- Number of complaints received per academic year.
- Number of suggestions received per academic year.
- Incident solution rate.
- Complaints solution rate.

Each programme's quality commission will be in possession of the following sources of evidence:

- A document approving the internal investigation of incidents, complaints and suggestions.
- Incident or complaints files.
- Annual reports about incidents, complaints and suggestions received in the doctoral programme.

17. Stakeholder satisfaction

Stakeholder satisfaction is assessed by means of questionnaires targeting students, teaching staff, doctors of the School and administration and service staff (ASS).

Data from the satisfaction questionnaire for students on doctoral programmes will be sent to the Quality Technical Unit, which will take charge of processing them and remitting them to each doctoral programme's Quality Commission.

For teaching staff, a general questionnaire has been designed which must be completed at the end of each academic year. The data will be processed by the Quality Technical Unit and analysed by the relevant doctoral programme's quality commission.

The satisfaction survey of ASS related to doctoral studies will be carried out every two years. The Quality Technical Unit will process the data it generates and remit it to those responsible for each doctoral degree.

The data that emerge from all these questionnaires will be analysed annually by each doctoral programme's quality commission and presented in its *Quality Memorandum*.

Each programme's quality commission will be in possession of the following sources of evidence:

- Doctoral student satisfaction questionnaires.
- Doctoral programme teaching staff satisfaction questionnaires.
- ASS satisfaction questionnaires.

18. Teaching and research staff training

The UAHS plans, manages, monitors and assesses specific training activities for teaching staff which contribute to their professional development and encourage innovation and streamlining of teaching practice. This is a key activity when it comes to sharing, diffusing and conceiving innovative experiences related to the doctoral programmes.

The training activities for teaching staff participating in doctoral programmes may be characterised as opportunities for reflection whose purpose is to deepen awareness and knowledge of particular issues related to research supervision. The activities are open access and free and coordinated by reputed professionals belonging to the UAH or to other institutions.

As a support structure for teaching staff, the UAH's Virtual Classroom is responsible for training in the use of e-learning platforms for managing learning and teaching. The Virtual Classroom holds beginners' and advanced level courses in the use of new methodologies and technological tools of application to teaching. Doctoral programmes may make use of the Virtual Learning Unit and the virtual teaching platform, Blackboard, for any activity related to them.

Each programme's quality commission will set out in its *Quality memorandum* these indicators relating to teaching staff training activities:

- Number of training activities run.
- Number of participants.
- Number of user registrations on the virtual platform, broken down into teaching staff and students.

Each quality commission will be in possession of the following sources of evidence:

- Reports on the development and monitoring of training activities.
- Reports on participation in the Virtual Classroom.

19. Material resources

Each doctoral programme makes available different material resources and support for its students: laboratories and workshops, libraries, access to databases, connectivity, and so forth, details of which are set out in the programme's verification memorandum.

In its *Quality memorandum*, each doctoral programme's quality commission will analyse whether the available material resources and other facilities are sufficient to guarantee the conduct of students' research. The following indicators will be taken into account:

- Available material resources and other facilities for students.
- External resources and travel pools providing financial aid for attending conferences and for stays abroad.
- Funding of seminars, day conferences and other national and international training initiatives.
- Percentage of students who secure post-doctoral grants or contracts.

Each quality commission will be in possession of the following sources of evidence:

- Evidence furnished by the QAS of the centre or centres where the doctoral programme is taught.
- Documentation of external resources acquired.

20. Managing QAS documents and evidence

All QAS documents will take effect from the moment they receive the definitive approval of the UAHDS Quality Committee or, when appropriate, the Rector. No document will be deemed valid until it has been signed and dated. If documents in electronic format are used exclusively in preference to printed documents, a note of any revision and approval will be made in the relevant minutes of the Quality Committee and measures will be adopted to ensure that the corresponding web-page shows the updated version of each and every QAS document and is installed with the necessary measures of security/protection.

Whenever a process is modified, it will be assigned a new edition number and the reason for the modification will be entered in the preliminary table. The first version will be assigned edition number "00". Each new modification will increase this number by one unit.

The *Quality Assurance System Manual* will be approved and revised by the UAHDS Quality Committee. Revision will be at least once every three years, and in any case whenever there are changes in the School's organisation and/or activities or in the regulations affecting it, or as a consequence of the outcomes of QAS assessments or reviews.

Sources of evidence and records will be filed by each programme's quality commission in a way that facilitates access to them. They must be kept on file until at least the next QAS certification inspection or the renewal of the degree's certification, unless express indication is given to the contrary. Sources of evidence subject to specific legislation must be conserved for as long as said legislation stipulates.

Access to the files will be restricted to the UAHDS Quality Committee, to each programme's quality commission, to those responsible for their upkeep (accredited as such in writing), and to the programme's academic committee.

The removal of any source of evidence must be authorised by the person responsible for its upkeep. In the physical space occupied by the document, a note will be left with the name of the person and the date on which it was removed.

21. Analysis, improvement and accountability

As set out in section 4 of this *Manual*, each doctoral programme's quality commission will write an annual report stating the programme's results. This report, the *Quality memorandum*, will be sent to the UAHDS Quality Committee for approval. The memorandum will assess the results of the doctoral programme, achievement of the prescribed quality goals and the efficacy of improvement actions undertaken, and make recommendations for whatever new improvements may be needed. Attached to this *Quality memorandum* will be an annual plan of improvements.

The memorandum will be made available by whichever means are deemed appropriate to the stakeholders nominated by the quality commission. Once approved by the UAHDS, it will be remitted with the rest of the programmes' memoranda to the UAH Quality Committee, which will inspect it and write a general university quality memorandum. This in turn will be brought before Governing Body by the Vice-rector responsible for matters of quality for its approval and then published appropriately in line with the UAH's Communication Plan.

This process is an attempt to satisfy the greater part of the QAS requirements by making public the conduct and results of the degrees of doctor and by instituting a mechanism for reviewing and improving them and the QAS itself.